

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GEORGE 02412 261839Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-01 ICA-11 EB-08 AID-05
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R 261750Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7299
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE GEORGETOWN 2412

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, GY
SUBJECT: BURNHAM ANNOUNCES ANTI-CORRUPTION CAMPAIGN

1. IN A SPEECH ON SUNDAY, JULY 23 BILLED AS A THANK YOU TO RESIDENTS OF GEORGETOWN WHO SUPPORTED THE GOVERNMENT IN THE JULY 10 CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM, PRIME MINISTER BURNHAM ANNOUNCED A CAMPAIGN TO END CORRUPTION AND INCREASE EFFICIENCY IN GOVERNMENT AND STATE OWNED CORPORATIONS. ACCORDING TO GOVERNMENT-OWNED NEWSPAPERS, THE PRIMIN INDICATED THAT SOME CASES HAD ALREADY BEEN PREPARED BY THE POLICE AND PUBLIC PROSECUTOR. BURNHAM PLEDGED THAT INDIVIDUALS WILL BE PROSECUTED FOR THEFT AND CORRUPTION REGARDLESS OF POLITICAL AFFILIATION OR THEIR POSITION IN THE GOVERNMENT, IMPLYING CLEARLY THAT SOME SENIOR PARTY AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ARE UNDER SCRUTINY. THE PRIMIN ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT HE WOULD BE VISITING PUBLIC CORPORATIONS TO HEAR WORKER COMHLAINTS, ENCOURAGE EFFICIENCY, AND ENSURE GREATER WORKER PARTICIPATION IN MANAGEMENT.

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2. COMMENT. CORRUPTION BY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS HAS BEEN A PROBLEM FOR THE GOG. THE AVERAGE GUYANESE IS ILL-DISPOSED TO HEED THE GOVERNMENT'S CALL FOR GREATER AND GREATER SACRIFICES TO DEAL WITH GUYANA'S ECONOMIC CRISIS WHILE GOG OFFICIALS ARE THOUGHT TO LINE THEIR OWN POCKETS AND FLAUNT THEIR ACCESS TO GOODS UNAVAILABLE TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC. IT IS COMMONLY SAID THAT SENIOR OFFICIALS OF A

GOVERNMENT-OWNED BANK HAVE ILLEGALLY AMASSED HUGE SUMS OF MONEY, CONVERTED THEM TO HARD CURRENCIES, AND TRANSFERRED THEM OUT OF THE COUNTRY. OTHER HIGH AND MEDIUM-LEVEL OFFICIALS WORKING IN THE AREA OF FOREIGN TRADE ARE THOUGHT TO HAVE MADE PERSONAL PROFITS BY MANIPULATING GUYANA'S REGULATIONS ON THE IMPORTATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF GOODS. ALTHOUGH THE PUBLIC UNDOUBTEDLY WELCOMES THE OVERDUE ANNOUNCEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER BURNHAM TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THESE PROBLEMS, SKEPTICISM REMAINS AS TO WHETHER THE PRIMIN WILL LIVE UP TO HIS PLEDGE TO PULL NO PUNCHES IN ACHIEVING A SOLUTION.
DWYER

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